

Episode One Hundred Thirty Eight - Letter to Menoecus 5 - Pleasure Part One

Post by "Don" of September 4, 2022 at 2:38 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

on the one hand, there are the natural desires; on the other, the 'empty, fruitless, or vain ones.' And of the natural ones, on the one hand, are the necessary ones; on the other, the ones which are only natural; then, of the necessary ones: on the one hand, those necessary for eudaimonia; then, those necessary for the freedom from disturbance for the body; then those necessary for life itself.

Several points. Not necessarily original, just on my mind.

There are two primary categories of desires:

A. Empty/fruitless/vain/groundless ones

B. Natural ones

So, whatever desires are not empty are natural

Of the Natural ones, there are:

A. Just natural ones (these are sometimes qualified as "not necessary" in some parts of the text but not here; here it says they're "only natural")

B. Those natural AND necessary

Of these natural AND necessary ones, there are:

1. Those necessary for eudaimonia

2. Those necessary for the freedom from disturbance for the body

3. Those necessary for life itself

I have a hard time figuring out what falls into B1. What is "necessary" for my well-being? If I translate it another way, what is "necessary" to make me happy?

However, what if we look at it differently? Is B1 concerned with mental disposition and B2 specifically addressing physical disturbance? Is eudaimonia primarily mental or both mental and physical? But then how to integrate B3 into the mix? I'm convinced it is NOT a hierarchy but rather a classification system.

For B2...

127i. αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν, αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν.

ἀοχλησία "freedom from disturbance"

σώματος genitive singular of σῶμα

σῶμα "the body; one's material body or existence"

"then, those [necessary] for the freedom from disturbance for the body; then those [necessary] for life itself."

There are some translations that interpret αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν to mean only things like clothing and shelter - those things that provide "freedom from disturbance" for the body, that is for one's physical existence. That isn't literally what is written so that is simply one interpretation. Those kinds of things - clothing and shelter - would seem to fall under the final category of those necessary for life. So, this category should catch those between eudaimonia and those necessary for life. This is an interesting category.

I would contend that those "necessary for life itself" are those essentials at the base of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: food, water, shelter, sleep, air, etc. Again, clothing and shelter would seem to fall into this category.